

Can't Afford Court Filing Fees?

If you believe you cannot afford to pay filing fees, you may be able to ask the court to waive those fees. Before you begin your case, you may ask the court to waive the requirement that you prepay the fees. When your case is completed, you can ask the court to waive the final fees.

Prepayment Waivers

- Prepaid costs are fees that you pay up-front **before your case can begin**.
- Two types of prepayment waivers:
 - Automatic fee waiver: You must be a client of an approved legal service provider. Your lawyer will include a statement along with your court papers noting that you are eligible for a waiver.
 - Discretionary fee waiver: If you don't have a lawyer, or if your lawyer is not an approved legal service provider, then you may ask the court to waive the prepaid costs.
 - ✓ Complete a **Request for Waiver of Prepaid Costs Form (CC-DC-089)** and give it to the clerk with the papers you need to file.
 - ✓ The judge will consider your family income and other factors that may impact your ability to pay the prepaid costs.
 - ✓ If your request is denied, you have 10 days to pay the fee so that your case can begin.
 - ✓ If you fail to pay the fee, the court will consider your case withdrawn.
- *REMEMBER: A prepayment waiver only removes the requirement that you pay the fee up-front. You will have to pay at the end of your case unless the court orders otherwise.*

Final Waivers

- Even if the court waived fees at the beginning of your case, you may still have to pay those fees **after your case is over**. If you believe that you cannot afford to pay them, you can ask the court for a final waiver of costs.
- Complete a **Request for Final Waiver of Open Costs Form (CC-DC-090)**.
 - File this form with the court.
 - Give a copy to the other person or that person's lawyer.
- Make your request as soon as possible at the conclusion of your case.
- You may file the form and supporting documents with the clerk. You may also submit the request in court on the day of your hearing.
- The judge will rule on your request and issue an order. If the judge did not make the decision during court, a copy of the order will be mailed to you.



My Laws, My Courts, My Maryland

mdcourts.gov

PROMOTING EQUAL JUSTICE FOR ALL